

REMARKS

The Office Action dated July 31, 2007 has been received and carefully reviewed. The preceding amendments and the following remarks form a full and complete response thereto. Claim 10 is amended. No new matter is added or amendments made that would require further consideration or search. Claim 13 was the subject of a restriction requirement and has been withdrawn. Claim 13 is cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. The Applicant reserves the right to file a divisional application directed to the subject matter recited in claim 13. Accordingly, claims 10-12 are pending in this application and are submitted for consideration.

Claim 10 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,653,362 to Gerber. Claims 11 and 12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Gerber by reason of obviousness. The Applicant respectfully traverses the rejections and submits that claims 10-12 recite subject matter that is neither disclosed by nor obvious in view of Gerber.

Claim 10, upon which claims 11-12 depend, defines a method of cutting sheet members, including steps of: a) stacking a plurality of sheet members having air impermeability; b) fixing the sheet members by vacuum suction; c) locally heating a seam allowance of pattern pieces, or a region outside the seam allowance, near a cutting line by frictional heat between the sheet members and a knife or a punch of a cutting head, to weld the sheet members together vertically to fix upper and lower sheet members; and d) cutting the sheet members welded in step c along a predetermined cutting line along the pattern pieces. Thus, sheet members are welded before cutting.

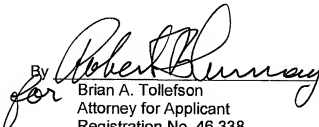
Gerber fails to disclose the claimed method and, in fact, teaches away from these claimed features. In particular, in column 8, lines 15-18, Gerber discloses that if pattern pieces are beginning to fuse to each other, the heat output is lowered. Thus, Gerber teaches away from the combination of welding the sheet members and then cutting the members. Thus, the Applicant submits that the rejections of claims 10-12 are improper. Accordingly, the Applicant requests that the rejections be withdrawn and claims 10-12 be allowed.

In view of the above, all objections and rejections have been sufficiently addressed. The Applicant submits that the application is now in condition for allowance and requests that claims 10-12 be allowed and this application passed to issue.

In the event that this paper is not timely filed, Applicant respectfully petitions for an appropriate extension of time. Any fees for such an extension together with any additional fees maybe charged to Deposit Account No. 02-2135.

If for any reason the Examiner determines that the application is not now in condition for allowance, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner contact, by telephone, the Applicant's undersigned attorney at the indicated telephone number to arrange for an interview to expedite the disposition of this application.

Respectfully submitted,

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